

VOL. 68 - 73rd YEAR**MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1990****NO. 240****JEWS FLEEING CHAOS IN SOVIET UNION
ARRIVING IN ISRAEL BY THE THOUSANDS****By Hugh Orgel and Cathrine Gerson**

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Alarmed at mounting chaos in their homeland, thousands of Jews have left the Soviet Union in recent days and are arriving in Israel in record numbers.

More than 5,500 landed at Ben-Gurion Airport from Thursday evening through Sunday morning, and the weekend total was expected to exceed 7,000 by Sunday night.

The arrival rate is about 100 an hour. Chartered El Al planes and aircraft of the Polish and Hungarian airlines are bringing the olim in from Warsaw, Budapest and Bucharest, Romania.

The immigrants are required to change planes at those points because there are still no direct flights to Israel from Moscow.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, which pays the cost of transporting the immigrants, predicted that between 1,200 and 1,300 immigrants will be arriving daily from now on.

By comparison, 1,909 Soviet Jews arrived in Israel in all of 1987, and only 220 arrived during the entire previous year.

Soviet Jewish immigration for December is expected to exceed 30,000 and rise to 40,000 in January, as economic deterioration and political uncertainty grip the Soviet Union. By comparison, just under 5,000 Soviet Jews arrived in Israel last January.

No Change After Shevardnadze

The weekend volume was so large that the Orthodox-controlled Absorption Ministry had no choice but to allow flights to land on Friday night and Saturday. But it insisted that immigrant processing be put off until after the Sabbath.

That meant that the newcomers had to be bused to hotels in the Tel Aviv area and returned to the airport after Shabbat to be registered and assigned to absorption locations around the country.

The flood of arrivals is placing a severe strain on Israel's economic and social fabric.

Uri Gordon, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, was sharply critical of the government's absorption efforts in an Israel Radio interview Sunday. He rapped the various ministries for wasting time arguing among themselves over jurisdiction.

"It's about time everybody realized we are in an emergency situation," Gordon said.

On the same news broadcast Knesset member Arieh (Lova) Eliav of Labor, speaking by telephone from Moscow, denied the mass exodus of Soviet Jews was an act of panic.

Eliav, who has been touring the Soviet Union with Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky of Likud, objected to articles in the Israeli press that depicted scenes outside the Israeli consular mission in Moscow as "breicha."

The word literally means escape and also refers to the illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine right after World War II.

"There is no doubt that the Russian Jews feel a strong pressure to leave, but it cannot be compared to the 'breicha' of the 1940s," he said.

Eliav said he and Shilansky had received assurances that "even after the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet emigration policy will not change."

Eliav also said the two Knesset members "met with over a thousand Russian Jews studying Hebrew with teachers sent from Israel."

"We have lit Chanukah candles with Jews in Lithuania, we have spoken at endless mass meetings and we are both very satisfied with our visit here," he said.

First Mobile Homes Arrive

Like Gordon, however, Eliav stressed that Israeli politicians and citizens in general must realize "we are being tested, the greatest test of them all: absorbing hundreds of thousands of Jews streaming into the country."

One of the most serious challenges is housing the newcomers.

A container ship arrived at the port of Ashdod on Sunday with 441 American-built mobile homes, the first consignment of temporary housing to reach Israel from the United States.

Each unit is 40 feet long and contains 144 square feet of living space. Another 3,000 of the same kind are due in Israel next month, and 50,000 smaller units will be imported next year.

But they may not be enough to keep pace with immigration, and tent cities may have to be set up.

The first shipment was three days late. The vessel had an engine breakdown near Crete and had to be towed to Israel.

**SOVIET JEWS ARE ALSO FLOCKING
TO GERMANY IN GREATER NUMBERS****By David Kantor**

BONN, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Although minuscule compared to the tens of thousands pouring into Israel, the number of Soviet Jews flocking to Germany has also surged in recent days.

About 300 arrived in Berlin over the course of three days late last week. They have been coming at the rate of 100 a week for the past month, according to Matthias Jahr, director of the office in former East Berlin that counsels and helps Soviet Jews.

But the situation is very bad, Jahr said, because Berlin cannot provide accommodations for the newcomers.

More than 2,000 Soviet Jews have arrived since May seeking residence permits. Jahr said the number of refugees has increased sharply because of the debate in Germany over whether to absorb Soviet Jews and how many.

The prime ministers of the 16 federal states that comprise unified Germany met to discuss the matter last week. Max Streibl of Bavaria said they agreed "to accept a considerable number of Soviet Jews over a period of several years."

Some media reports said the most likely ceiling was 1,000 a year.

The prime ministers, who have responsibility for settling immigrants in their states, were praised by Heinz Galinski, chairman of the German Jewish community, for setting no absolute quotas.

The Jewish community is lobbying hard for

free immigration for Soviet Jews and has political support from the opposition SPD, or Social Democratic Party.

Annemarie Renger, a veteran SPD politician, said last week that Germany had a moral obligation to absorb any European Jews who were being persecuted.

Manfred Stolpe, the SPD prime minister of Brandenburg, in what was formerly East Germany, said he was moved that Soviet Jews trust Germans enough to want to settle here, despite the horrors of the past.

More than 150,000 Soviet Jews have gone to Israel since January to escape anti-Semitism and growing political and economic problems in the Soviet Union.

But a persistent minority of Soviet Jewish emigres feel Germany offers greater political and economic stability.

Nevertheless, tougher immigration laws are being planned to head off the stream of refugees from Eastern Europe.

ISRAEL REJECTS U.N. REPORTING ROLE FOR UNRWA AND JERUSALEM CONSULATES By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Israel has made clear it will not countenance a political role for U.N. agencies or foreign legations in Israel.

"We are totally opposed to any changes in any of the international agencies," Avi Pazner, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's spokesman, declared Sunday.

That was the sharp reaction in official quarters here to reports that U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar plans to use personnel of UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, to implement provisions of the resolution adopted Dec. 20 by the U.N. Security Council.

Among other things, the resolution calls on the secretary-general to "monitor and observe the situation of Palestinians under Israeli occupation," making use of "United Nations and other personnel and resources present there in the area and elsewhere."

The secretary-general was instructed to report to the Security Council every four months on the status of human rights in the territories.

According to reports from New York over the weekend, Perez de Cuellar has informally advised the Security Council that he plans to use both UNRWA and consulates in East Jerusalem to discharge its mandate.

Israel has rejected the resolution as "biased" and "unbalanced" and said it would not contribute to peace. Shamir predicted it would gather dust in the U.N. archives.

But observers here said Israel's diplomatic stance would escalate tension between Jerusalem and U.N. observers in the region.

Pro-Palestinian Viewpoint

Israeli officials explained that UNRWA's role, with which Israel has never interfered, has always been to administer to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population. They stressed that Israel would not accept a change in that role that would give UNRWA a political function.

As in the case of UNRWA, Israel considers the consulates in East Jerusalem to share the Palestinian viewpoint because they are chiefly concerned with the situation of Palestinians in the administered territories.

Israel rejects the notion of them furnishing the secretary-general material for his periodic reports, to which the government objects in any event.

The seven consulates in East Jerusalem are not officially accredited to Israel, because its sovereignty over Jerusalem is not recognized by the international community.

The consuls general formally submit their credentials to an official of the Interior Ministry who bears the title of district officer, an inheritance from the British Mandate.

In practice, some of the consuls maintain ties with the Foreign Ministry, though they regard their main task as maintaining contact with the Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The United States, for instance, maintains a consulate in western Jerusalem, which services Israelis and Americans in Israel, and a consulate in East Jerusalem, which functions as a quasi-mission to the West Bank.

In addition to UNRWA, other U.N. agencies in the region include UNTSO, the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, which was established during the 1948 War for Independence. UNTSO still maintains a presence here, though it has long been rendered obsolete by U.N. observer forces established in the aftermath of later wars.

The 10-nation Multinational Force monitors the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty concluded in 1979. The Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement of 1974 is monitored by the 1,250 troops of UNDOF, the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force, and the nine-nation UNIFIL, or United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, has been deployed in southern Lebanon since 1978.

LONE INFILTRATOR FROM JORDAN IS KILLED BY ISRAELI PATROL By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- A lone infiltrator from Jordan was killed by an Israel Defense Force patrol Saturday while trying to break through the security fence along the western bank of the Jordan River near the Damya Bridge.

The intruder was carrying a single gasoline bomb and a Koran but was otherwise unarmed.

According to military sources, the IDF soldiers found the infiltrator by following his footprints, then shot him fatally after he failed to respond to their challenge. There were no Israeli casualties.

In another troubling incident over the weekend, an Israel navy gunboat stopped a Lebanese ferry at sea Friday night and seized six Lebanese and Palestinian passengers who were en route to Cyprus.

According to Israeli sources, four of the Palestinians admitted under questioning that they had been trained in Libya for terrorist activities.

The two other passengers were released.

The infiltration incident was the eighth of its kind from Jordan this year, a worrisome fact for Israel after years of sharing a largely quiet border with the Arab state.

The two most recent previous incidents, both last month, each resulted in the death of an Israeli army officer.

After those attacks, Jordan's King Hussein had a confidential message conveyed to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, assuring him Jordan has not changed its longstanding policy of trying to prevent infiltration of Israel from its territory.

**21 U.S. SAILORS REPORTED DEAD
AFTER LAUNCH CAPSIZES OFF HAIFA**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Memorial services were held Sunday for 21 American soldiers who drowned in Haifa Bay shortly after midnight Friday, when a private Israeli launch hired to ferry sailors to the U.S. aircraft carrier Saratoga capsized in rough waters and sank, only yards from the ship.

The fatality count was raised from 20 during the services with the announcement that a seaman who had been reported unaccounted for had been aboard the ill-fated launch. Although presumed drowned, his body had not yet been recovered.

Weeping sailors tossed a wreath into the water as helicopters overhead continued to search for bodies.

The Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron, and other Israeli generals attended the ceremony and expressed their condolences in private conversations.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir sent regrets about the accident to President Bush, Israel Television reported.

There were 84 survivors among the 102 sailors on the launch, of whom 50 were hospitalized in Haifa hospitals. Defense Minister Moshe Arens visited the injured, two of whom were still hospitalized on Sunday.

The final death toll could not be determined until an accounting was made of 1,924 sailors reported to have been on shore leave, U.S. officials said.

U.S. Embassy personnel thanked the Israeli authorities for their speedy assistance and rescue efforts.

The survivors were plucked from the water by U.S. and Israeli helicopters and police boats. Floodlights from helicopters and harbor craft illuminated the black waters as the search for bodies and survivors continued through the night.

No Evidence Of Sabotage

The Saratoga, which has been stationed in the Red Sea off the Saudi Arabian coast in connection with Operation Desert Shield, docked in Haifa on Friday with three escort vessels for Christmas leave.

It was the first leave for the crew of the Saratoga since it left its home port of Jacksonville, Fla., on Aug. 7.

The 1,200-foot carrier has a complement of 4,500 crew members, of whom 1,900 were on shore leave Friday.

The vessel is too long, too broad and too deep to enter Haifa harbor, much less dock alongside. It lay at anchor 1.2 miles offshore in Haifa Bay.

Investigations into the disaster are being conducted by the U.S. Sixth Fleet, of which the Saratoga is a member vessel, the shipping division of Israel's Transport Ministry and the Haifa harbor police. They are trying to find out why the Israeli launch, named Ein Tuvia, capsized and sank within seconds when it was about 100 feet from the floating landing stage alongside the carrier.

Sabotage was ruled out as a cause of the accident, a U.S. Embassy spokesman said.

A preliminary inquiry indicated that the launch might have lost stability when most of the sailors jammed the disembarkation area on the starboard quarter.

The seas were running high at 1:30 a.m. Saturday morning and the small vessel apparently was swamped by a wave, heeled sharply to starboard and could not recover.

The vessel's captain, Yosef Shohat, who was rescued along with its sole crewman, Noah Or, said the bay was rough Friday night, which is why he reduced his boat's normal carrying capacity of 131 to 102.

Soldiers Said To Have Been Unruly

The U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv denied local reports that many of the sailors were drunk after making the rounds of Haifa bars and that some were so unruly they were brought to the launch handcuffed by the Navy shore patrol.

Embassy officials said seamen are never handcuffed aboard small boats but admitted one man was handcuffed after his rescue because of his wild conduct.

On Saturday, U.S. Navy divers inspected the sunken launch on the floor of the bay. The craft is lying on its side about 100 feet below the surface. Several bodies were extricated from the cabin, where they were trapped.

The wreck will be raised and the hull inspected for structural faults.

The ferry was reported to be seaworthy. It passed its last inspection and was licensed to operate in worse conditions than those encountered Friday night. The vessel was due for another inspection in three months.

The vessel is owned by the Ogen Co., a subsidiary of Solel Boneh, an industrial conglomerate owned by Histadrut, Israel's labor federation.

No explanation was offered as to why the U.S. Navy used a private launch to ferry its personnel back to the Saratoga instead of the ship's own boats.

**REPORTED ISRAELI TEST OF MISSILE
PUTS U.S. TROOPS IN GULF ON ALERT**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Israeli officials refused to comment over the weekend on reports that Israel test-fired a missile over the Mediterranean on Friday morning, which triggered a red alert among U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf.

According to the reports abroad, there is some dispute over whether Israel gave the United States advance notice before it launched a Jericho-2 missile, which has a 750-mile range.

As soon as the launch was detected, a maximum alert was sounded for U.S. armed forces deployed in Operation Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia.

Soldiers donned gas masks and anti-chemical-warfare clothing and took to bunkers and trenches.

The all-clear sounded about 10 minutes later. The alert was called about four hours before U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Gen. Colin Powell, arrived in Saudi Arabia to meet with soldiers.

Pentagon sources were quoted over the weekend as saying the launch "could have been a test" or it could have been an Israeli demonstration to show Iraq it has the means to retaliate against a missile attack.

According to The New York Times, an unidentified senior Pentagon official said the missile launching had been detected by American intelligence, probably by satellite surveillance.

SLOVAKS HONOR HOLOCAUST VICTIMS, ACKNOWLEDGE ROLE IN ATROCITIES

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Members of the National Council, the parliament of the Slovak republic, observed a minute of silence last week in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, after acknowledging that anti-Semitic acts were perpetrated by Slovaks during World War II.

They vowed that would never happen again.

A declaration was read at a Dec. 20 session of the National Council by a member of parliament, Jana Mistrikova, who was a student leader during the upheaval in Bratislava in November 1989 which overthrew the Communist regime.

Slovakia is the eastern part of the confederation that constitutes the republic of Czechoslovakia, headed by President Vaclav Havel.

But Czechoslovak Jews have cause for concern about the powerful Slovak separatist movement, which includes elements nostalgic for the fascist puppet state set up in Slovakia by the Nazis during the war. That regime, headed by Josef Tiso, a Roman Catholic priest, deported tens of thousands of Jews to death camps.

The statement by the deputies of the National Council recalled that era.

"Today, after one year of free life, we representatives of the whole of Slovakia and its various political streams and groups feel that it is our moral duty to express publicly to our Jewish fellow citizens our deep regret for the wrongs perpetrated against them," the statement said.

It recalled that in 1942 and 1944, tens of thousands of citizens of Jewish origin were deported from Slovakia and that nearly all of them perished in concentration camps.

"This crime against humanity burdens the conscience of all of us, though most of us belong to new generations which have no personal share in the tragic events of nearly half a century ago."

The statement noted that "many Slovaks then took part in the armed struggle against violence and did their utmost to help their Jewish co-citizens against persecution.

"On the eve of the forthcoming holidays of mutual understanding and love, we meditate about our past and inquire into our conscience, at the same time offering our hand to all nations and nationalities that lived and live with us in our common country," the statement said.

"Consider this declaration a promise that new, democratic Slovakia will never go astray from the road of respecting freedom, of tolerance, democracy, legality and interhuman love without regard to nationality, race, religion or conviction."

COURT ACQUITS 14 TIED TO PLO ARMS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- A court in Venice on Friday acquitted all 14 defendants in a case involving alleged arms traffic between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Italian Red Brigades.

The verdict, which the Italian news media called "surprising," ended an investigation and trial that began more than seven years ago.

One of the accused freed by the court is Abu Iyad, a close aide to PLO chief Yasir Arafat, for whom the prosecution had asked a 16-year prison term.

The others acquitted included members of the Italian secret police, accused of participating in a coverup, and sympathizers of the Red Brigades, an guerrilla group active in the 1970s, who allegedly arranged the contacts with the PLO.

The case arose from a cargo of machine guns, explosives and other weapons Red Brigades leader Mario Moretti allegedly smuggled to Italy from the Middle East in 1979.

The machine guns were found to have been sold to Tunisia by an English firm in the 1960s and then passed to Al Fatah, the wing of the PLO controlled directly by Arafat.

KLARSFELD SAYS MITTERRAND SHELTERING VICHY OFFICIAL

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 23 (JTA) -- Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld has accused President Francois Mitterrand of protecting a former Vichy official in order to conceal his own service to the Vichy regime.

The stunning charge was made in an interview in *Actualite* Juive, a Jewish weekly which quoted Klarsfeld as saying the president "wants to avoid a close study of his own activities in Vichy, where he started his political career," and was therefore protecting Rene Bousquet, former head of the Vichy government's police.

Bousquet, 81, has been ordered to stand trial for crimes against humanity based on evidence unearthed by Klarsfeld and his associates.

The Paris lawyer, who helped track down Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie, is the first prominent French Jew to question Mitterrand's past.

Mitterrand, a Socialist, joined the French Resistance in 1942, as Klarsfeld acknowledged in the interview. But before that, he worked for the Veterans Administration run by the Vichy regime, Klarsfeld said.

According to Klarsfeld, Mitterrand is deliberately protecting Bousquet to prevent "too close scrutiny" of the Vichy administration, its officials and policies.

Jewish leaders refused to react officially to Klarsfeld's charge, made Dec. 18. But privately they said they were deeply disturbed and feared that "this sort of talk" could drive a wedge between the Jewish community and the president.

Mitterrand has a longstanding reputation of friendship with the Jewish community. But earlier this year, he publicly condemned "irresponsible elements" in the Jewish community who accused him of being an accomplice of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat during Arafat's visit to France.

Bousquet was tried by a special tribunal in 1949 for collaboration with the enemy and was given a symbolic sentence which was suspended.

Subsequently, he enjoyed a long remunerative career as a banker and headed several large corporations until he retired five years ago. when Klarsfeld brought new charges against him.

Klarsfeld and an organization of children of Jewish deportees have produced new documentary evidence that Bousquet ordered the Vichy police to arrest Jews.

The prosecution originally asked for trial by a special tribunal which has been long dormant and could take years to reconstitute.

But the Court of Appeals, France's second-highest jurisdiction, rejected that request last month and ordered Bousquet tried by a regular criminal court.